



Sand Creek Massacre NHS

Summer, 2004 Site Update and Historical Background

Welcome to the second Sand Creek Massacre NHS newsletter. In this issue, Park Ranger Craig Moore continues the historical and biographical sketches of some of the many people who have been in one way or another associated with the Sand Creek Massacre and who connect its legacy to the present day. The Sand Creek staff continues to give many public programs to schools, historical societies, civic organizations, and other groups. Staff is also researching archives and photo collections, and most importantly, visiting with descendants of those who were there on the Big Sandy Creek on November 29, 1864, recording genealogical information and collecting family photos. One article summarizes the Cheyenne and Arapaho oral history projects that were major components of the Sand Creek Massacre Site Location Study in 1999 and that continue as ongoing efforts among the tribes today. The historical memory passed from one generation to the next provides a deep pool of knowledge that will help guide the National Historic Site's planning and management efforts as the site becomes established. Currently, together with the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, other federal, state, and local agencies, and local landowners, the NPS is working with various researchers to understand what the site area looked like in 1864 and how has it changed since then; how to prevent fire and manage it should it occur; how to manage the short grass prairie without cattle for the first time in more than a century; how to make the site accessible to the public after the formal establishment occurs, and many other issues. As these planning efforts proceed, we draw closer to a formally established National Historic Site and the protection, interpretation, and commemoration of this nationally significant place in perpetuity.

Alexa Roberts, Superintendent



Blanche and the late Henry (Morning Hollering) Whiteshield, Hammon, Oklahoma. To read about the Whiteshield's story of the Sand Creek Massacre, turn to page two of this issue.

(Photo courtesy Mark Whiteshield)

Puebloan Headed Company G at Sand Creek

A few miles east of Pueblo, CO. lies the community known as Baxter. It was here, 143 years ago, that a young Hoosier, Oliver H. P. Baxter, started a ranch and began a five decade career as a southern Colorado pioneer and civic leader. Appointed by Governor Gilpin as a commissioner to organize Pueblo County, Baxter, the Republican, would also serve as a Pueblo City Councilman and on the Territorial Legislature. Oliver Baxter was the first Noble Grand of the Pueblo Lodge of Odd Fellows, a member of the Southern Colorado Pioneers' Association, and the G.A.R. Born in Jefferson County, Indiana in 1835, Baxter was named after the 1813 Lake Erie battle hero Oliver Hazard Perry.

In the late summer of 1864 Baxter, at the behest of Colonel Shoup, began mustering a contingent of southern Colorado soldiers – these men became Company G, Third Colorado Cavalry. With Oliver Baxter as Captain, Company G marched from Baxter's stockade to Booneville where they joined their regiment and began the eastward trek to Fort Lyon and Sand Creek.

Attached alongside companies B, I, and K, Baxter's G men became part of the Colorado Third's 2nd Battalion, Major Hal Sayre commanding. In the field report of Colonel Shoup, "G, led by Captain Baxter and Lieutenant Templeton, pursued the demoralized and flying savages to the south and west, killing upward of 20 Indians." The report of Major Sayre noted that "Companies B, G, and K moved across the creek and went into action on the north side of the creek and west of the Indian town, where they remained for several hours, doing good service while under a heavy fire...Both officers and men conducted themselves bravely." In his own manuscript, Baxter wrote of Sand Creek: " My company was in the advance or lead and about 300 of my men were Mexicans and half breed Indians...Colonel Chivington...ordered me to send my scout, and cut off their horses, and start



Oliver H.P. Baxter, southern Colorado pioneer and veteran of the Sand Creek Campaign. (Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, Z.8906)

them for Fort Lyons...At once a line of battle was formed and the Indians were completely surprised, rushed for their tepees and began retreating up the bed of Sand Creek...We kept pressing them and killing everything in sight...Col. Chivington's first order was, 'boys remember the women and children that these tribes have killed, spare none' and this was obeyed. We had got them nicely flanked on both sides and were driving into the center and killing them fast. ...Morgans Battery was ordered to the front and commenced shelling them...they broke and scattered...we had to follow them in every direction killing them where ever we got close enough...We followed them in this running fight until late in the evening...After recanoitering the country around that section we finally returned to Fort Lyons and from there went to Denver...When we mustered out, we of the Arkansas Valley Co. mostly returned to our ranches and homes."

In the years after Sand Creek, Oliver Baxter

moved to Pueblo, his first home being at 5th & Main – about 1893 he moved into the mansion that still bears his name – the Baxter House at 15th and Grand. Prior to his passing in 1910, Baxter's many endeavors included a flouring mill, banking, real estate, Pueblo Gas and Electric, and the Pueblo water system. Among his charitable contributions were helping found the Colorado Mineral Palace and the Pueblo Opera House.

The day following Baxter's death, the Pueblo Chieftain newspaper ran the following : " Mr. Baxter was respected by all who knew him. He had an unlimited number of acquaintances and friends in Pueblo and southern Colorado, many of whom...have expressed themselves that his word was ironclad and that there was no more loved man in the entire state. He was a friend of the friendless and his deeds of charity, unheralded to the public, were legion."

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The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Union and Confederate Armies;
Government Printing Office, 1893.
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The Pueblo Chieftain, April 16, 1910
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Arapaho Healing Run, August 12- 13, 2004

Once again the community of Eads provided a warm welcome for the more than 60 Northern Arapaho tribal members who traveled to southeastern Colorado for the 2004 Spiritual Healing Run from the Sand Creek Massacre Site to a location near Bennett, CO.

On Thursday evening, about 50 community members contributed an array of foodstuffs to the potluck supper at the Eads Community Building. More than enough barbeque beef and buns were almost entirely donated by Safeway. Assistance with the set up and clean up was provided by the National Park Service along with volunteers Jeff Campbell and Farm Service Agency staff Rod Johnson and Walt Immer.

A short welcome was provided by Kiowa County Commissioner Rod Brown, who acknowledged the support of the Fair Board for the air conditioning that makes the Community Building a cool and comfortable place to gather.

Shortly thereafter, the audience was treated to an evening of singing, drumming, and dancing performed by Arapaho dancers and a drum group from the Wind River Reservation, Wyoming.

Interpretation of various dances and styles was graciously provided by Sandra Iron Cloud. After the singing of the Arapaho flag song, many dances were performed, including a mini grand entry, grass, traditional, shawl, fancy, chicken, and sneak- up. Two of the young dancers, Kalen Sun Roads and Sam Iron Cloud spoke to the audience about the significance of participating in the run and the importance of staying focused in school and learning about Arapaho



Northern Arapaho youth prepare to start Spiritual Healing Run, August 13, 2004

traditions and cultural values. Finally, to conclude the evening's festivities, the Arapahos held a Friendship Dance and invited all the members of the audience to join in.

The next morning, dancers, runners, and other participants arrived at the Eads High School for a breakfast prepared by Betty Cahill and family and then caravanned to the site to begin the run. The run, dedicated to Arapahos Norman Moss and Clark Trumbull Sr., was initiated with prayers and blessings of the staff and the runners, and reminders that the purpose of the run is not to race, but to pray and reflect. Then, the runners took off down the road for the first ten- mile stretch of the relay run, escorted by Deputy Sheriff Danny Christie and Kiowa County Fire Department members Bill Yohey and CJ Filbeck.

Gail Ridgely Sr. and other organizers of the run thanked the community for its continued support and for the abundance of food that helped sustain the runners. The

National Park Service would also like to especially thank all the people previously mentioned as well as Jack Howard with the Kiowa County Road and Bridge shop who mowed parking areas at the Sand Creek site, Bent's Old Fort Natural Resources Manager Karl Zimmermann and his crew and Ashely Brown who helped with serving breakfast and clean up at the high school and at the Sand Creek site on Friday morning.

Sand Creek Massacre NHS Features Bent Family



Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site featured a photographic and text display about the family and descendants of William Bent and his Cheyenne wife Owl Woman at the County Fair in Eads, Co. September 9- 12. The idea for the exhibit was originally based on the important role played by the Bent family at the Sand Creek Massacre and related events of the 1860's. As the idea for a photographic display took shape, it was decided to expand the exhibit by including pictures and information from succeeding generations of the family.



Lucy Bent, daughter of George Bent

(Courtesy F. Shrum Family)



Lucille Bent (Left) with her brother Bill Bent – grandchildren of George Bent

(Courtesy F. Shrum Family)

It is hoped that as Sand Creek Massacre NHS acquires more photos and information, the display will continue to grow. Eventually, the staff would like to present the display at other National Parks, state and local Historical Societies, museums, libraries, and at educational institutions throughout the west, particularly in Colorado and Oklahoma. Information for the display has been and will continue to be enhanced with the gracious assistance and contributions of Bent family members. Additional photos, with copyright use, are being purchased from the National Anthropological Archives, the Denver Public Library, The Oklahoma Historical Society, and other repositories. Once the project nears completion, it is hoped that funds will be available to have the exhibit professionally formatted by the NPS' Harper's Ferry Center or another professional graphics distributor.

The history of the William Bent family has been documented in several biographies and other publications, the best known of which is *Bent's Fort* by David Lavender, published in 1954 by Doubleday & Co. The genealogy of the William Bent family, undertaken by the late Quantrille D. McClung and published in 1962 by the Denver Public Library is entitled *Carson- Bent- Boggs Genealogy*. Another work, *The Bent Family in America*, which traces the family back to the 17th Century, was compiled by Allen H. Bent and published in the early 1900's. Attempts to research the Bent family, particularly the Cheyenne side, often focus upon the oft- used letters of George Bent, as well as tribal census, allotment, and heir ship records. Using these many sources, and also with the assistance of Bent descendants, the National Park Service has been attempting to compile an accurate genealogy of William Bent's family for over twenty years.

William Bent was born May 23, 1809 and passed away May 19, 1869. His children included Mary, Robert, George, Julia and Charley Bent. These were the children and step- children of Owl Woman and her sisters Yellow Woman and Island Woman. Two of Bent's sons, George and Charley were in the Cheyenne camp at Sand Creek while their older brother Robert was being forced to guide the Colorado troops to the village. It is unclear if their sister Julia was in the Cheyenne camp. The eldest daughter Mary, wedded by this time and the mother of two year old William Bent Moore and his younger brother George Moore, was not in the camp.

In addition to the history of the Sand Creek Massacre, the **WILLIAM BENT FAMILY** display should appeal to anyone interested in the history and cultures of Colorado and the American west, as well as genealogists and those pursuing Cheyenne, Arapaho and other Plains Indian research. Please contact Park Ranger Craig Moore at (719)383- 5010, extension 20 for additional information.

Oral History: Critical part of Sand Creek Massacre Legacy and Research



In November, 1998 the National Park Service specified that tribal oral histories would be collected and used as a critical part of the NPS Sand Creek Massacre Site Location Study. In the ensuing months, previous oral history projects such as those done by the Oklahoma and Colorado Historical Societies were researched, helping to provide foundation for the NPS efforts. In the context of the NPS study, oral history is regarded as primary source material collected from the oral traditions of social groups and families as passed from generation to generation.

Under the direction of Alexa Roberts, and in cooperation with other project team members, a number of preliminary or planning visits were initiated – these were held in Concho, OK, Lame Deer, MT, and Ethete and Riverton, WY. Appropriate traditional protocol, methods of interviewing, as well as general background preparation was pursued, along with identifying a potential list of interviewees.

Once the different tribes – Northern and Southern Arapaho and Northern and Southern Cheyenne, determined how they wished to conduct oral histories, the project commenced in April, 1999. Interview sessions were held intermittently at



Old man Whiteshield. (1838-1938). Chief Whiteshield was a leader of the Southern Cheyenne. Whiteshield's people were affiliated with the camps of Chief Red Moon and others who took allotments near Quartermaster Creek, over 100 miles west of Darlington Agency in Indian Territory.

schools, homes, a tribal nutrition center, and other locations. Funding, linguistics, culture, and other considerations made portions of the project difficult – ultimately, however, most agreed that oral history is vital to the long-range management of the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site.

Gathering oral histories was done by various tribal members, assistants, and NPS staff. The Ridgely, Waterman, Brady, and Cometsevah families, along with many others, were instrumental in organizing the project. The project's final interview was conducted on January 28, 2000.

As described by the Director of the project, *"It is difficult but important to try to convey the depth of emotion attached to any discussion of the Sand Creek Massacre among descendants..."* Also prominent *"...is the detailed recounting of the genealogical relationships of victims or survivors of the massacre to present day descendants."* An excellent example of this was the interview conducted with Southern Cheyenne elder Blanche Whiteshield on June 2, 1999.

Blanche Whiteshield is the daughter of John and Anna (Cornstalk Woman) P.Hart. Blanche's husband, the late Henry Whiteshield, was the son of Chief Ben Whiteshield (White Eagle/Quiver) and Mary Big Bear (Red Blanket). Blanche's grandparents were Afraid of Beavers, Walking Woman, Chief Black Short Nose and Woman Later. Henry's grandparents were old Chief Whiteshield and Sitting With. Chief Whiteshield was a leader of the Red Moon Cheyenne camps; he passed away July 26, 1938. Blanche and Henry are the parents of Mark, Rita, Cecil, Marcy Lee, Pearl Ann, and the late Noah Mark Whiteshield.

In her interview Mrs. Whiteshield describes what happened to one of Henry's relatives at the Sand Creek Massacre, *"his grandma's son – came running and jumped into the bank. His religion was clowns, or Backwards, it was religion, not in a funny way. He came and jumped in and the woman, the nurse said, 'no, you've come to the wrong place.' He saw that a baby was born and he jumped out because he's backwards, that means he was happy seeing the baby. He started to run off but the soldiers shot him down."* Blanche also talked about what happened to her husband's grandma, *"she got shot down at the tipi and they cut her up everywhere. She was still breathing and alive. She was Spanish Woman. She had a little girl. And she escaped some way. Her mother, Spanish Woman was badly wounded. They tried to take care of her but she was dying and she was asking for her little girl but they told her she escaped...When she died I don't know what they did. Anyway, that's what our grandmas told us...They were all relatives. It was one village, one man's family...That's all I can remember."*

The interview with Blanche Whiteshield was one of a dozen oral histories acquired among the Southern Cheyenne. In Montana, there were 18 Cheyenne stories, narratives and interviews collected. Among the Arapaho Nation, interviews were provided by about a half- dozen people. Throughout the process, careful attention was given to confidentiality. To help protect the "intellectual property" of the interviewees, copyright was applied to some tapes and transcripts; for others, interviewee consent forms, or verbal consent was used. When stories were provided in native dialects, particular concern and effort was given to interpretation of the words and meanings into English – accuracy and truthfulness were at the heart of the project's translation efforts.

For the Sand Creek Massacre project, oral history was especially valuable in emphasizing the historic geography and natural resources of the Sand Creek village area. Traditional knowledge of the massacre site is regarded as critically important in efforts to locate the events of November 29, 1864.

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Alexa Roberts, Superintendent, Sand Creek Massacre NHS

Park News



Made possible by the Rocky Mountain Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit at the University of Montana, Dr. Mark Feige and Ms. Julia Langfield, Colorado State University, are researching the environmental history of the Sand Creek Massacre Site area, focusing on what the site might have looked like in 1864 and how it has changed since then. The research will help the National Park Service to fulfill one of the requirements of the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site authorizing legislation, which states that NPS shall manage the site "...in a manner that preserves, as closely as practicable, the cultural landscape of the site as it appeared at the time of the Sand Creek Massacre" (P.L. 106- 465 Section 5(b)(1)(C)). To add to this knowledge, additional NPS funds have been awarded to the Bent's Old Fort and Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Sites to begin researching tribal uses of Southern Plains prairie plants. Focusing on Cheyenne and Arapaho knowledge of the Sand Creek Massacre Site area environment and ecology, this project combined with the environmental history project, will begin to provide

irreplaceable baseline knowledge for the appropriate long- term stewardship of the site's natural resources.

Along with efforts to properly manage the site's natural environment, the National Park Service is working closely with Kiowa County, the Colorado State Forest Service, the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, and private landowners to develop fire Management plans. The main goal is to prevent fire from occurring within the National Historic Site boundaries, but if it does, to have a plan in place for an effective response. NPS has obtained three additional grants for Kiowa County totaling \$28,000. Two of these grants were for the purchase of personal protective equipment and portable water tanks for the volunteer fire department. The third grant is for a workshop to be held mid- September among the NPS, Kiowa County, the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, local landowners, and the State of Colorado to develop a Fire Prevention and Response Plan for the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site. The development of this plan will be a significant accomplishment and will make all interested parties feel more secure and prepared, especially following the recent rains which have caused a tremendous growth in grasses and other plants that will soon dry out and become highly flammable.

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Local Students Assist Park

Two young ladies from Eads, Colorado, Ashley Brown (L) and Brandi Roberson (R), recently completed four weeks of employment at Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site. The two were hired through the *Student Temporary Employment Program*. Ashley is the daughter of Van and Leanna Brown and Brandi is the daughter of Chad and Shawn Roberson. Ashley plans to continue her education at Regis College in Denver while Brandi, who recently graduated from Lamar Community College, is enrolled at Colorado State University in Fort Collins.

Working with Karl Zimmermann and Frank Pannebaker, Natural Resources Managers at Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site, one of the main accomplishments of Brandi and Ashley was assisting in the re-vegetation of an eroded portion of a two-track road in Section 24, between NPS property and the Dixon and Bowen properties. The two young women also collected, pressed, and helped to identify dozens of plant specimens. These specimens will assist with determining historic and contemporary range conditions. Ashley and Brandi also helped place fire monitoring plots – these contain information and documentation about species and ground cover so that in the event of a fire, plant composition can potentially be reconstructed and replanted. Another important task was learning about and using GPS (Global Positioning System) to plot and monitor the locations of prairie dog towns and wetlands areas.

An "end of the season" meal for Brandi and Ashley was held on Friday, August 6. Each was presented with a certificate of appreciation from the NPS, and recognized for their hard work, dedication, and valuable assistance. The efforts of these two students will help ensure a solid foundation of knowledge about the natural resources of the site.

John S. Smith: Plainsman and Sand Creek Eyewitness

A Kentuckian, John Smith was a veteran plainsman who worked for many years as a trader for Bent, St. Vrain & Company. By 1847, Smith, who by his own admission had learned to talk Cheyenne while working for Bent and St. Vrain, had landed an official position as an interpreter with the Upper Arkansas Indian Agency. As a U.S. Interpreter, Smith assisted men such as Agents Thomas Fitzpatrick, Albert Boone, Samuel Colley, Thomas Murphy, and Brinton Darlington, as well as Superintendent of Indian Affairs David Mitchell and Indian Commissioner N.G. Taylor.

Smith was interpreter at the Camp Weld Council in September, 1864 when Cheyenne and Arapaho Chiefs met with Colorado Governor Evans, Colonel Chivington, and Major Downing. John Smith also translated for the Cheyenne during treaties at Fort Wise, Little Arkansas, and Medicine Lodge. Known as "Uncle John", "Gray Blanket" and "Blackfoot", Smith accompanied tribal delegations on visits to the White House. In this way, Smith appeared before Presidents Millard Fillmore, Abraham Lincoln, and Ulysses Grant.

"Uncle John" was trading in the Cheyenne village at Sand Creek when it was attacked on November 29th, 1864. Smith narrowly escaped – his son Jack, half Cheyenne, was killed. Smith's Sand Creek testimony was taken in the nation's capitol by the Committee on the Conduct of War and also a Joint Special Committee on the Condition of the Indian Tribes. On March 14, 1865 as Smith was testifying about Sand Creek, Congressman Gooch of Massachusetts asked Smith *"How many years have you been with the Indians?"* – Smith replied *"...twenty-seven consecutive years with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes."* A week earlier, before Senator Doolittle, Smith was asked *"How long have you lived in the country west of Kansas, in Colorado?"* - to which "Blackfoot" replied *"I went to that country first in 1830."* Previously that winter, at Fort Lyon on January 16, Smith supplied Post Adjutant William Minton the following information



about Sand Creek: *"On the twenty-sixth day of November, 1864, I received permission of Major Scott J. Anthony, commander of the post [Fort Lyon] to proceed to the Indian village on Sand Creek for the purpose of trading with the Indians...On the morning of the twenty-ninth of November...the village was attacked...with a command of from nine hundred to one thousand men...The village was composed of about one hundred lodges...From my observation I do not think there were over sixty warriors that made any defence [sic]. I rode over the field after the slaughter was over and counted from sixty to seventy bodies of dead Indians...When troops first appeared I endeavored to go to them, but was repeatedly fired upon...When the troops began approaching in a hostile manner, I saw Black Kettle hoist the American flag over his lodge, as well as a white flag, fearing that there might be some mistake..."*

John Smith passed away on June 29, 1871. He is buried among the Cheyenne and Arapaho at Concho, Oklahoma. In 1865, two of Smith's children, William and Armama received land in the Arkansas Valley through Article V, Treaty of the Little Arkansas. Four years earlier, Smith's son Jack had received via the Fort Wise Treaty, *"...six hundred and forty acres of land, lying seven miles above Bent's Old Fort...including the valley and point of rock."* Among Smith's descendants are many enrolled members of the Cheyenne, Sioux, and Arapaho tribes. His granddaughter, the late Standing Out, was the wife of George Bent and later old man Sorehead, a Cheyenne.

Standing Out Smith, granddaughter of John Smith
(NAA 265-g)

140 years after Sand Creek, John Smith's role in western Indian affairs continues to be controversial and much debated. Did he, as some claim, as a partner of Dexter Colley, bilk the Indians out of their annuity goods? Did he as others contend, propose to claim \$25,000 against the government as a result of Sand Creek? Like other legacies of Sand Creek Massacre, the odyssey of "Uncle John" will likely forever remain an enigma. Perhaps the words of Louis Garrard, an Ohioan who met Smith in 1846, sums him up best: *"I use to look at him with astonishment and wonder if he was*

not the devil incog. He & I often sang hymns, and a more sanctimonious, meek, peace-with-mankind look could nowhere be found than in his countenance; at other times he sacre-ed in French, caraho-ed in Spanish, or interpolated with thunder strike you in Cheyenne, or at others, he emphatically damned in American."

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Sand Creek

At dawn on November 29, 1864, approximately 500 volunteers of the Colorado Third Regiment and two battalions of the Colorado First Regiment all under the command of Colonel John Chivington attacked a village of Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians. Chiefs Black Kettle, White Antelope, Yellow Wolf, Wolf Mule, Left Hand and others were camped along Sand Creek in southeastern Colorado Territory. During the course of the day, about 150 Indians were killed, including many women and children. The troops also suffered, with over 50 men wounded or killed. Atrocities associated with the attack engendered military and congressional investigations. These committees condemned the actions of Colonel Chivington and most of his officers and men. Chivington, his counsel Major Jacob Downing and other soldiers and citizens defended Sand Creek – and in 1883, Chivington, speaking before the Pioneer Society of Colorado, uttered the words “I stand by Sand Creek.”

The Sand Creek Massacre has remained one of the most controversial events in American history.

More Park News: Training workshops kick-off summer months

Sand Creek staff, along with Southern Arapaho Sand Creek Massacre Representative Lee Pedro attended a *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) & National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)* workshop in Las Animas, CO on June 8-10. Hosted and taught by the National Park Service, the training outlined compliance procedures and provided a general overview of federal laws and regulations. Curriculum contained a series of ten modules, enhanced by handouts and short videos. Instructions for writing Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements, requirements for public involvement, partnering with State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices and other issues of importance to the establishment and management of the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site were highlighted.

On June 3-5, Sand Creek Massacre NHS Superintendent Alexa Roberts participated in the *Your Town, the Citizens Institute on Rural Design* workshop. The event was funded through the National Endowment for the Arts, with assistance from the National Park Service, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and Kiowa County Economic Development Foundation. Held at Eads, CO High School, the workshop was one of only six held across the U.S. in 2004. Focus was primarily on scenic resources, community revitalization, historic building rehabilitation and the creation of a heritage tourism program for Kiowa County. The upcoming impact of the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site on tourism to Kiowa County was discussed.